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Mountain last year; not an individual was gathered this season, though many searches were made.

Binghamton, N. Y.

CHAS. F. MILLSPAUGH.

Pine-needles.—We read with interest, in the BULLETIN for August, just issued, that Mr. Meehan now is in accord with the botanical world in general in the belief that pine-needles “are true leaves, and not modifications of branches,” as he has formerly taught. And really the reasons for his former opinion seem to be fairly overborne by the assigned reason for his conversion, namely, that in certain three-leaved fascicles of a pine, “each is a trifle shorter than the other.”

Perhaps his suggestion that “all pines are monophyllous in the early stages of growth” because the needles of a bundle sometimes stick together for a while, but separate by “a light tap” on the apex, may be equally overborne by the consideration that this is incompatible with his statement “that a fascicle of pine-leaves is a depressed spiral,” and by the fact that the adjacent needles of the bundle of white pine-leaves in question merely stuck together, but were never united.

A. GRAY.

The “Mocker-Nut.”—The word *mock*er, in the name “mockernut,” affords an example of an accommodated spelling due to a popular, though very erroneous, etymology. Michaux (Hist. des Arbres forestiers de l’Amer. Sept., i., 178–9) says of the fruit of *Carya tomentosa*:

“The shell, which is very thick, slightly striate, and of extreme hardness, contains a kernel which is sweet, but small, and difficult to extract on account of the very strong dissepiments that divide it; and it is probably for this reason that this species has been called the mocker-nut hickory.” By this he would have us to understand that the nut was so called because it *mocks at* one’s efforts to extract its kernel.

This explanation, notwithstanding its absurdity, has been copied into various books, and is, I think, the only one that has ever been offered; at least I have never met with any other.

It seems useless to mention the fact that to speak of a mocker nut in the sense assigned to the prefix by Michaux would be as un-English as it would be to speak of a cryer baby, a barker dog or a flower stream.

The *c* in the word *mock*er is epenthetic, and the name mocker-nut stands for (New York) Dutch *moker-noot*, ‘heavy-hammer nut,’ *i. e.*, one which, owing to the thickness of its shell, it takes more than a light hammer to crack.

The old and correct spelling, moker-nut, should be restored in botanical works, and the other, which is entirely meaningless, should be left to the trade-language of the nut-market, where perhaps it originated.

W. R. G.